

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1-12. (Canceled).

13. (Currently Amended) A method for selectively providing a coupling between a first mechanical device and a second mechanical device, comprising:

providing an electromechanical coupling unit having at least two coupling windings, wherein the coupling unit is configured to provide selective coupling between the first and second mechanical devices, and wherein each of the coupling windings is configured to be supplied with electrical energy by at least one connected electrical control unit;

actuating the coupling unit to be closed if none of the two coupling windings are supplied with electrical energy, whereby the coupling unit provides a coupling between the first and second mechanical devices; and

actuating the coupling unit to be open if at least one of the two coupling windings is supplied with electrical energy, whereby the coupling unit provides no coupling between the first and second mechanical devices;

wherein:

at least one electrical control unit is respectively assigned to each of the first and second mechanical devices, wherein each electrical control unit selectively supplies, using at least one trigger element, the respective connected coupling winding with electrical energy, as a function of state of the respective connected coupling winding,

each connected electrical control unit has a respective assigned power supply,
the electrical control units connected to the coupling windings are each assigned to one of the two mechanical devices,

the electrical control units detect, with the aid of sensors, the functioning of the coupling unit, and

a functional test of the coupling windings is implemented, and each individual coupling winding is cut off from supply of electrical energy for a brief predetermined period and the coupling unit remains open during the functional test.

14. (Canceled).

15. (Canceled).

16. (Canceled).

17. (Canceled).

18. (Canceled).

19. (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) A steering system for selectively providing a coupling between a first mechanical device and a second mechanical device, comprising:

an electromechanical coupling unit having at least two coupling windings, wherein the coupling unit is configured to provide selective coupling between the first and second mechanical devices; and

a plurality of electrical control units, wherein each coupling winding is connected to at least one of the electrical control units, and wherein each of the coupling windings is configured to be supplied with electrical energy by at least one connected electrical control unit;

wherein the coupling unit is configured such that the coupling unit is: a) closed if none of the two coupling windings are supplied with electrical energy, whereby the coupling unit provides a coupling between the first and second mechanical devices; and b) open if at least one of the two coupling windings is supplied with electrical energy, whereby the coupling unit provides no coupling between the first and second mechanical devices, and

wherein:

at least one electrical control unit is respectively assigned to each of the first and second mechanical devices, wherein each electrical control unit selectively supplies, using at least one trigger element, the respective connected coupling winding with electrical energy, as a function of state of the respective connected coupling winding,

each connected electrical control unit has a respective assigned power supply,

the electrical control units connected to the coupling windings are each assigned to one of the two mechanical devices,

the electrical control units detect, with the aid of sensors, the functioning of the coupling unit, and

a functional test of the coupling windings is implemented, and each individual coupling winding is cut off from supply of electrical energy for a brief predetermined period and the coupling unit remains open during the functional test.

21. (Previously Presented) The steering system as recited in Claim 20, wherein the first mechanical device is a steering handle and the second mechanical device is a steered vehicle wheel.

22. (Previously Presented) The steering system as recited in Claim 21, further comprising:
at least one sensor for detecting the functioning of the coupling unit.

23. (Previously Presented) The steering system as recited in Claim 21, wherein at least one electrical control unit includes at least one trigger element for supplying the connected coupling winding with electrical energy.

24. (Previously Presented) The steering system as recited in Claim 21, further comprising:
at least one data line for exchanging information between the electrical control units.

25. (Previously Presented) The steering system as recited in Claim 20, further comprising:
at least one sensor for detecting the functioning of the coupling unit; and
at least one data line for exchanging information between the electrical control units;
wherein the first mechanical device is a steering handle and the second mechanical device is a steered vehicle wheel, and
wherein at least one electrical control unit includes at least one trigger element for supplying the connected coupling winding with electrical energy.

26. (Canceled).

27. (Currently Amended) The steering system as recited in Claim [[26]] 20, further comprising:

at least one sensor for detecting the functioning of the coupling unit; and

at least one data line for exchanging information between the electrical control units;

wherein the first mechanical device is a steering handle and the second mechanical device is a steered vehicle wheel, and

wherein at least one electrical control unit includes at least one trigger element for supplying the connected coupling winding with electrical energy.

28. (Canceled).